

## **National Sea Grant Office Travel Procedures for PATs**

The National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) will adopt the following travel procedures for all Program Assessment Team (PAT) reviews:

1. The NSGO will continue to divide the travel preparation and process responsibilities for PATs as currently practiced. In most instances, this will mean that two secretaries will continue to share responsibilities to process travel for each PAT. Staff will be the secretary with Panel responsibilities for Panel members of PATs and the secretary of the NSGO division. This practice provides a level of redundancy that is needed to assure continuity. As such, for each PAT, two administrative support staff members will know the details of that PAT and can provide backup to one another avoiding unpreventable bottlenecks that would occur with only one person doing all travel.
2. The Panel secretary will serve as the coordinator for all PAT travel with responsibility for quality and timeliness in preparing and processing travel.
3. The NSGO will adopt the timeframe as suggested in the Panel's draft travel recommendations:
  - a. Travels should return all the necessary and required travel expense information and required receipts to the National Sea Grant Office within 10 business days [two weeks] from the end of the official travel period.
  - b. Within 10 business days from the time that all the necessary and required expense information and receipts are received from the traveler by the NSGO, the NSGO shall review the information received to determine if all the necessary and required documents are in order. If so, the NSGO will process a travel voucher and return such to the traveler for approval and signature. If additional information is needed, the traveler will be notified and further information will be requested. When this is received, and the travel will be processed in the same manner.
  - c. Within 3 days of receipt of the traveler's signed travel voucher, it will be forwarded for NSGO budget review and NSGO senior staff signoff.
  - d. If the paperwork is in order, within 10 days of receipt of the traveler's signed travel voucher, the NSGO's review and signoff should be completed.
  - e. Within 3 days, the NSGO will send the signed voucher to NOAA Travel for processing and notify the traveler of such and give the traveler an estimated date as to when the reimbursement is likely to be received.
  - f. The traveler will be provided a simple document to return to NSGO confirming receipt of funds.
  - g. The NOAA process should take no longer than 7-10 business days once received. The Treasury direct deposit "payment" process usually takes 48-72 hours to electronically deposit funds into your account. NOAA Travel may dispute the amount claimed and readjust your voucher as necessary. Should that happen, the NSGO would notify the traveler of the change(s).
4. The NSGO will improve its tracking system for travel to better monitor the travel reimbursement process for PATs and TATs. The tracking system will allow

better identification of travel processing bottlenecks and should lead to the identification of “best management practices.”

5. The NSGO will evaluate the travel process to empirically determine whether or not time improvements have been made. The first such evaluation will occur at the midpoint of the FY2006 PATs.

Prepared by D. Carter, S. Grimes, and F. Schuler  
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